



THE
ROYAL REGIMENT
OF FUSILIERS

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THE
ROYAL REGIMENT
OF FUSILIERS





A BRIEF HISTORY

This famous Regiment can trace its origins as far back as 1673 when Sir Walter Vanes Regiment was formed in Holland for service against the French. In 1674 the 'Irish' Regiment was formed similarly to fight on behalf of the Prince of Orange against France.

These two Regiments were taken into the establishment of the British army in 1685 becoming the 5th and 6th Regiments of Foot. In the same year the Tower Guard, a force of sentries at the Tower of London, were re-organised to form the 7th Foot, with the special responsibility of guarding the Kings Artillery. They were armed with a new and special type of musket, called a fusil, which worked on a flintlock principle as opposed to the 'matchlocks' used by the rest of the army, which clearly were most hazardous when in close contact with the large amounts of gun powder necessary for the train of artillery. The 7th were named after their 'new' weapon in a short time, thus becoming the Royal Regiment of Fuzileers. In 1688 Peytons regiment was formed to subsequently become the 20th Foot.

Thus were formed the four regiments which were subsequently to become the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers in 1968.

To follow the history of the four regiments is to follow the history of the British Army.

All the regiments saw service in Ireland in the late 17th century, then in Flanders.

Some served as Marines with the Royal Navy whilst others took part in the Spanish war.



A BRIEF HISTORY

In the 18th century, the British Army saw service throughout Europe and America.

An incident occurred at the Battle of Minden, which was fought on 1st August 1759, when the soldiers of the 10th decorated their hats with red and white roses to celebrate their victory. This tradition is continued to the present day, when the headgear, drums and colours are bedecked with roses to celebrate 'Minden Day'.

Another tradition was established in 1762 when the 5th were in the forefront of action at the Battle of Wilhelmstahl, where they captured several French colours and also the fur headgear of the French Infantry. As a result of all this, the 5th were given a third Regimental colour, called the 'Drummers' Colour, and the regiment took to wearing the fur hats, thereby starting the 'Fusilier Busby' tradition, an item still worn by the Regimental Bands and Corps of Drums.

All four regiments served under the Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular War, taking part in nearly all of the major battles. Of particular mention is the 5th Foot's part in the storming of Ciudad Rodrigo.

An interesting fact is that none of the four regiments were involved at the Battle of Waterloo although the 20th were sent to St. Helena to guard the exiled Napoleon to act as his pall-bearers at the original burial.

In 1836 the 5th became the Northumberland Fusiliers.



A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1852 the troopship Birkenhead was en-route to South Africa when it was wrecked in False Bay. 638 soldiers and families were on board. This was the occasion when the saying 'women and children first' really did count, as although only 193 soldiers survived, all the women and children were saved. 60 of the soldiers on board were of the 6th.

1854 saw the start of the Crimean War, in which all the regiments saw service, the 7th in particular were to distinguish themselves both at Inkerman and Sebastopol winning five Victoria Crosses in the process.

All four regiments were involved in the quelling of the Indian Mutiny in 1858, and both the 5th and 7th saw service in Afghanistan in 1879.

Major changes took place within the British Army in 1881 and the 5th, 6th, 7th and 20th became respectively the Northumberland Fusiliers, The Royal Warwickshire Regiment, the Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) and the Lancashire Fusiliers.

In 1899 the Boer War started and in due course all four regiments saw service and along with the rest of the army they learned the difficult lessons that eventually led to victory, and also laid the essential foundations for musketry and field craft that become the basis of the British Army prior to the first world-war.

The Royal Warwicks had spent a considerable time in South Africa both during the Boer War and also



A BRIEF HISTORY

earlier in the late 1870's, and it was this that gave rise to the regiment having a small antelope as their mascot. The modern regiment still have a Rhodesian Black Buck as their mascot.

World War I saw the need for a massive expansion of the British Army, and the four regiments made a major contribution to this, the Royal Fusiliers (City of London) for example consisted of 4 Regular and 24 Militia or Territorial Battalions in 1914. Together the regiments contributed 163 battalions. Their losses, which reflect the commitment made and the fact that they were always in the forefront of the action, were 63,150 of all ranks killed, and between them the 4 regiments received 103 battle honours.

In 1915, on the 25th April, the Lancashire Fusiliers took part in the Gallipoli landings, sustaining very heavy casualties the Regiment won six V.C.s 'before breakfast'.

After the war the reductions of the army had little effect on the regiments, and they were to be seen on service both in the U.K. and in India, Germany and many other places.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 saw all four regiments in the B.E.F. in France. They all returned to England via Dunkirk and then they were off with all their various battalions to the Western Desert, the Far East, and Europe via the Italian and Normandy landings.

At the end of the war the Royal Warwickshires were honoured by the appointment of Field Marshall Montgomery as their Colonel in Chief.



A BRIEF HISTORY

The four regiments entered the times of peace after the war by seeing active service in Palestine, Egypt, Korea, Kenya and Cyprus. They also kept the peace in Hong Kong, British Guiana and Borneo, and then more active service in Aden and South Arabia.

In 1963 the 6th became the Royal Warwickshire Fusiliers and as such became part of the Fusilier Brigade joining the three other regiments.

1968 saw the formation of a new regiment. It was very large for the modern army, consisting of four regular battalions formed from our four Fusilier Regiments, and a fifth battalion of territorials. Its title was The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers. One regular battalion was disbanded subsequently but an additional territorial battalion was added and this became the format of the Regiment until 1992.

The new regiment has seen service in Germany, Cyprus, Hong Kong and Belize as well as active service in Northern Ireland and the recent Gulf War.

Under the options for change scheme the Royal Regiment of Fusiliers will lose another regular battalion, but the remainder will continue to carry the traditions of this fine Regiment.

BATTLE HONOURS INCLUDE



Namur 1695
Minden
St Lucia 1778
Egmont-Op-Zee
Rolica
Corunna
Busaco
Badajoz
Salamanca
Pyrenees
Orthes
Peninsula
South Africa

Inkerman
Lucknow
Afganistan 1878-80
Khartoum
Relief of Ladysmith
Imjin
Dettingen
Wilhelmstahl
Martinique
Maida
Vimiera
Talavera

Ciudad Rodrigo
Albuhera
Vittoria
Nivelle
Toulouse
Niagara
Alma
Sevastopol
Kandahar 1880
Atbara
Modder River
South Africa 1899
Korea 1950-58



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L I M I T E D E D I T I O N

THE

ROYAL REGIMENT OF FUSILIERS

THE 5th, 6th, 7th
AND 20th REGIMENTS OF FOOT

4000 SETS



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THE NUMBER OF
THIS BOX IS

